

Our Global Age Requires Global Education: Clarifying Definitional Ambiguities

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Humanity has entered a new epoch in the history of civilization. Globalization is occurring at lightning speed in the farthest corners of the Earth. The technical revolution in transportation systems has resulted in dynamic transnational and cross-cultural transactions among nations and peoples (Coughlin 1996; Diaz, Massialas, and Xanthopoulos 1999). The cellular phone, Internet, and satellite television instantaneously connect people on the planet. Billions of dollars are negotiated daily with the click of a mouse (Friedman 1999). A new consciousness has emerged about the roles that individuals, institutions, nations, and non-governmental organizations play in the new millennium (Anderson 1990; Cogan 1998; Lamy 1987; Tye 1999). Today, no nation remains untouched by the dynamics of change sweeping across the world. The global village has arrived (Barber 2000; Drucker 1993; Friedman 1999; Kennedy 1993; McLuhan 1964). The collective richness, multiple talents, and combined strength emanating from increasing

crosscultural interactions, however, have also brought problems of lack of tolerance and respect for others who are culturally and racially different, uneven distribution of resources, ethnic conflict, and struggles for power.

Why the Global Age Requires Global Education

Students who entered kindergarten in 1999 will graduate from high school in the year 2012. They will confront a world quite different from tribal initiations and graduation rites of the twentieth century. Those young adults will face a new world order. Their daily contacts will include individuals from diverse ethnic, gender, linguistic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They will experience some of history's most serious health problems, inequities among less-developed and more-developed nations, environmental deterioration, overpopulation, transnational migrations, ethnic nationalism, and the decline of the nation-state. The new age will challenge their emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being (Drucker 1993; Kennedy 1993; 1994; Kirkwood 1995).

All children, regardless of their birthplace, have a right to be educated, but will the graduates of the twenty-first

century be equipped with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills they need to become competent, responsible, and humane citizens of their community, state, nation, and world? Will they have acquired the sensitivities, tolerance, and respect for all human beings to live harmoniously in an interdependent world? That is the fundamental question facing educators in the new millennium, when the global age requires a global education.

Philosophy

The philosophical underpinnings of global education rest on the following assumptions: (a) human beings are created equal, regardless of age, ability, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or race; (b) human behavior is culturally, not racially, determined, (c) all members of the human family possess basic human rights, and (d) global education has a moral purpose (Csikszentmihalyi 1993; Farr-Darling 1994).

The moral imperative matches the individual's self-interest to the collective good, stimulating participants to higher levels of voluntary action (Fallows 1989). The moral imperative advances development of the common

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good that can be strengthened by globalization (Barber 2000). It postulates that human beings be tolerant of divergent values expressed by individuals and groups claiming their cultural identity (Botkin, Elmandjra, and Malitza 1979). It requires humankind to change twentieth-century emphasis on individual rights to emphasis on world-centered obligations (Reardon 1988a, 1988b; Schmidt 1999). A "civic culture" of individuals across the Earth must actively engage in meeting human needs (Boulding 1988). The philosophy of global education captures the very essence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant of the Rights of the Child.

Definitional Ambiguities

Inconsistencies in the use of terminology in education are not uncommon in the process of defining a new field (Tucker and Evans 1996; Tye and Tye 1992), and the field of global education has struggled in defining itself. Global scholars have used such terms as *global education*, *world-centered education*, and *global perspectives in education* interchangeably, whereas others assert that each term has its own distinct meaning. Furthermore, "international education is used interchangeably with or in conjunction with global education" (Knip 1985, 13).

International and Global Education

A clear distinction between international education and global education exists. International education refers to the traditional approach of language studies and area studies in higher education, and it tended to be an addition to existing programs and dependent on outside funding. In the past, international education was generally geared to the elite who wished to occupy positions in the foreign service (Alger 1986). In our universities, a major in international studies provides a broad range of programs in the cultural, economic, and political arenas, including foreign language immersion programs and internships abroad designed to promote

insight into the complexities of international relations.

Global education can be distinguished from international education efforts by its impact, which is much more pervasive in terms of its content and the people it reaches (Tucker 1990). The implications of global education are that

all professionals and bodies of knowledge must be prepared to deal with their involvement in worldwide systems. It requires the removal of the national border as a barrier in education at all levels and in all subjects. . . . It tends to be viewed as a necessity for everybody. All have a need to know in what ways they are involved, how they are affected, and how they affect people in other countries. (Alger 1986, 257)

Since its evolution after World War II, the alleged incongruities surrounding the definition of a global education have given way to a general consensus among scholars that "global education," "world-centered education," and "global perspectives in education" have similar if not identical meanings. Proponents seem to agree that each construct stands for an education that brings the world into the classroom, where teachers teach from a world-centric rather than an ethno-specific or nation-state perspective. Some global educators, however, consider existing global education definitions rife with inconsistencies. In this discourse, I attempt to clarify some of the definitional incongruities that linger in the field.

Definitions

To bring clarity to those definitional ambiguities, I have analyzed and compared global definitions developed by prominent global scholars. I used the Hanvey definition as a baseline because it is among the first scholarly definitions attempted in the field. My second reason for selecting the Hanvey definition is that it is one of the most frequently employed in schools (Benitez 2000; Kirkwood 1990, 1995; Merryfield 1997).

The Hanvey Definition

In "An Attainable Global Perspective," Hanvey (1976) proposed five

dimensions that prepare a student to achieve global awareness. The dimensions include perspective consciousness, state-of-the planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices.

To attain the first dimension, perspective consciousness, students need an understanding of the multiple perspectives held by people and nations about the world. The views comprise the deeply-held beliefs and assumptions of individuals, groups, and nations, regardless of time, space, and causality. The perspectives are not universally shared and may be profoundly different. The values have been shaped and continue to be shaped by influences that escape conscious detection yet exercise profound influence on human actions.

State-of-the planet awareness requires comprehension of prevailing world conditions, developments, trends, and problems confronting the world community. It demands an understanding of the causes of events and their effects on nations and people. It addresses global issues such as population growth, migrations, economic disparities, depletion of resources, and inter- and intranation conflicts, requiring global learners to be aware of the world around them.

Hanvey's third dimension, *cross-cultural awareness*, is informed by the diversity of ideas and practices in human societies and how the ideas and ways of one's own culture are perceived from other vantage points. Hanvey observes that sustained contact with another culture frequently reinforces stereotypes and cultural distance. Although intellectual understanding may find the actions of others "believable," empathy and transpection are difficult to achieve. They constitute the highest level of global cognition and compassion.

To have knowledge of global dynamics, one needs an understanding of the world as an interconnected system of complex traits and mechanisms and unanticipated consequences. The systems approach facilitates comprehension of the process of growth and the dynamics of change at local, national, and

international levels. Hanvey stated that an understanding of those processes requires high levels of sophistication on part of the student because of their unanticipated effects on the human condition.

Hanvey defined the fifth dimension as an awareness of human choices. He challenged aspiring global thinkers to realize the problems of choice confronting individuals and nations as consciousness and knowledge of global systems expand. Increased awareness of multiple perspectives and the dynamics of growth and change leads to new knowledge of systems interactions and their long-range implications.

Analysis

In analyzing global definitions developed by scholars, I have found that the underlying assumptions in conceptualizing the field vis à vis the Hanvey definition reflect three basic patterns that permeate definitions. The patterns fit into the three categories of congruent elements, author-specific emphases, and new elements not addressed in the Hanvey definition. I define *congruent* to mean identical or similar, *author-specific emphasis* to mean the idiosyncratic differences of similar ideas, and *new elements* to mean contributions by authors of new ideas not addressed in the Hanvey definition of a global education.

Congruent Elements

In analyzing the various conceptualizations in the field and comparing them with the Hanvey definition, I have found that existing global definitions are grounded in four major themes: multiple perspectives, comprehension and appreciation of cultures, knowledge of global issues, and the world as interrelated systems (Alger 1986; Alger and Harf 1986; C. Anderson 1994; L. Anderson 1990; Becker 1979; Case 1993; Kniep 1986, 1987; Merryfield 1997; Tye 1990; 1999; Tye and Tye 1992). The four themes correspond to the five dimensions of the Hanvey definition. The theme multiple perspectives concurs with the Hanvey dimension of perspective consciousness, the

theme of comprehension and appreciation of cultures corresponds with Hanvey's cross-cultural awareness, the global issues theme aligns with the Hanvey definition of state-of-the planet awareness, and the fourth theme of the world as interrelated systems correlates with Hanvey's knowledge of global dynamics. I give two examples to illustrate that similar ideas are expressed by different scholars.

In his definition of a global education, Case (1993) differentiated between perceptual and substantive elements in conceptualizing the field. His perceptual component focused on the development of worldmindedness and empathy; resistance to prejudicial thinking and stereotyping; and cross-cultural knowledge. These very elements are embraced by the Hanvey dimensions of perspective consciousness and cross-cultural awareness. Case's substantive element, the second component of his definition of a global education, includes the objects of a global education that incorporate the contemporary events, conditions, and locations in the world that Hanvey addressed in his state-of-the planet awareness dimension. In short, Case divided his definition of a global education into perceptual and substantive categories, whereas Hanvey elaborated on similar if not identical elements in three or more categories. Each author used different nomenclature to express similar thought.

How similar ideas are expressed differently by scholars is demonstrated in the following excerpt in which the author challenges students to see themselves as

human beings whose home is planet earth, [who are] citizens of a multicultural society living in an increasingly interdependent world, and who learn, care, think, choose, and act to celebrate life on this planet [to meet] the global challenges confronting humankind. (C. Anderson 1994, 5)

The above elements contained in the definition correlate to the five dimensions of the Hanvey definition. That one is a human being living on planet Earth reflects Hanvey's dimension of state-of-the planet awareness; living in a multi-

cultural society corresponds to the cross-cultural awareness dimension; living in an interdependent world embraces Hanvey's dimension of knowledge of global dynamics; and those who learn, care, think, choose, and act to celebrate life on this planet correlate with Hanvey's dimension of awareness of human choices. The authors' terminology is different, the substance the same.

Author-Specific Emphases

In addition to the four underlying themes recurring in major global definitions, some global scholars placed special emphasis on specific aspects of a global education not elaborated by Hanvey. I describe their ideas as author-specific or idiosyncratic and provide two examples.

One of the success stories in defining the global field, Alger (1986) received national and international recognition for his emphasis on the concept of interconnectedness. In *Columbus and the World*, Alger made a long-term contribution through his depiction of real-life connections between Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., and the world at large. His work demonstrates cultural, geographic, economic, political, and social interconnections between an American city and nations.

Another example of author-specifics in the definition of global education is the compelling argument about the role global education must play in an age of America's declining hegemony on the world stage. L. Anderson (1990) advocated that a definition of global education must include a requirement that students develop competencies that will prepare them to survive in a world characterized by accelerating growth and increasing inequities.

Another proposal profoundly influencing a global education definition emphasized a "world-centered" curriculum to be taught across content areas and grade levels (Becker 1979). Among the first global scholars in the field, Becker addressed the power of a global education curriculum engendered by its interdisciplinary, integrative, and holistic structure. His compelling contribu-

tions to the field are largely conceptual and transformative, empowering teachers to use a constructivist approach in teaching about the world.

Tye (1990, 1999) advanced a fourth definition, urging Americans to appreciate neighbors beyond their immediate borders. He reminds the serious learner that people of the world need and want much the same things as we do. Tye's multifaceted definition stresses the importance of deep understanding of the role of "the other in his or her world." Tye has proposed a "global mindedness" that includes validation of cultural universals.

Kniep made an important contribution in expanding the definition of a global education to include consideration of the persistent global problems that plague the contemporary world (Kniep 1987; 1986; 1985). Kniep argued that the urgency of global problems requires immediate attention if human disaster is to be averted. Although both Kniep and Hanvey are equally concerned with global issues and trends, Kniep elaborated on their unrelenting persistence, which requires immediate attention.

New Elements

New elements in the definition of a global education not addressed by the Hanvey definition were added by Alger and Harf, Case, Kniep, and Lamy. The ideas of those scholars brought forth concepts addressing global history, the world's players, acquisition of indigenously transmitted knowledge, and competence in analytical, evaluative, and participatory skills.

The fact that the history of the world is a global history (Kniep 1986; 1987) that is continuously intersected by historical and social phenomena across time and space added a new dimension to the original Hanvey definition of what defines a global education. Kniep realized the importance of balance when teaching national history that is generally approached from a nation-specific or ethno-centric perspective. An example of how nations are intertwined in the shaping of a people's history is demonstrated in the course of the American

Revolution (Tucker and Evans 1996). In our American history classes, the success of the American Revolution is generally attributed to the bravery and endurance of the Continental Army and its general. Seldom, if at all, is the success of the American Revolution also attributed to the assistance given to General George Washington by Admiral Count de Grasse and his French fleet at Yorktown or to the generosity of the ladies of Havana who partially financed the de Grasse expedition (Tuchman 1988). From my experiences as district coordinator of social studies, many American history teachers are unaware that the French and Spanish contributed significantly to the success of the American Revolutionary War.

A second new element added to the definition of a global education is the need to know about the role of non-governmental organizations in the affairs of the world (Alger and Harf 1986; Kniep 1987, 1986, 1986; Lamy 1987). The global scholars emphasized the importance of understanding the influence of the world's major policymakers.

A third new element in the definition of global education is the acquisition of knowledge transmitted by indigenous people (Lamy 1987). Lamy contended that a global education must entail knowledge about the contributions of native people who are representing the views of their world. The teaching of historical and contemporary events must be balanced by listening to indigenous voices. Lamy also noted the importance of students' acquiring the analytical, evaluative, and participatory skills that will be critical in managing the complexities of the future.

Another way to reach clarity in defining a global education is the study of universal values, as suggested by Case (1993), Kniep (1987, 1986, 1985), and Tye (1999, 1990). The authors pointed to the many commonalities of shared cultural elements, problems, needs, and wants among members of the human family, regardless of circumstances, space, and time. The concept elevates understanding and appreciation of one's fellow human beings to a high level of consciousness.

The Merryfield Definition

Merryfield (1997) combined the elements advanced by global scholars into what constitutes an all-inclusive global education definition, creating the most up-to-date framework in the field today. She included eight elements: human beliefs and values, global systems, global issues and problems, cross-cultural understanding, awareness of human choices, global history, acquisition of indigenous knowledge, and development of analytical, evaluative, and participatory skills. Merryfield's work contributes significantly in reducing, if not eliminating, the definitional ambiguities that still linger in the field. The path is cleared to facilitate global education in a global age.

Task Forces and Professional Organizations

Task forces and professional organizations in the United States developed their own definitions of a global education, and their definitions reflect the components formulated by global scholars. The Task Force on Global Education of the United States Commissioner of Education (1979) integrated global objectives congruent with the Hanvey definition: awareness of multiple perspectives, comprehension and appreciation of other cultures, knowledge of global issues, and the world as an interrelated system. Moreover, the task force added an ethical component to its definition that proposed

an awareness of the relationships between enlightened self-interest and the concerns of people throughout the world and awareness of informal learning experiences that will increase the individual's ability to understand his or her condition in the community and in the world. (4)

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE 1994) and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE 1994) proposed specific global objectives to be achieved in teacher education programs. Those reflect a broad definition of the global education field, with the organizations emphasizing interdependency of nations, universal human

values, and interlinkages of political, economic, ecological, and social issues.

The most comprehensive definition of a global education by a professional association was advanced by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS 1982, 1–2). The council outlined an in-depth definition on the meaning of a global education stating that

the human experience is an increasingly globalized phenomenon in which people are constantly being influenced by transnational, crosscultural, and multicultural interactions; there are a variety of actors (states, multinational corporations, private voluntary organizations, individuals) on the world stage; the fate of humankind cannot be separated from the state of the world environment; there are linkages between present social, political, and ecological realities and alternative futures, and citizen participation is critical both in local and world affairs. (NCSS 1982)

Except for the inclusion of an ethical component, the definitions developed by organizations are within the parameters established by the Hanvey definition. It is interesting to note that scholars and organizations in defining the field did not delve more deeply into the moral obligations individuals have toward their fellow human beings across the Earth.

Conclusion

In clarifying definitional ambiguities of a global education perceived by global scholars I contend that the incongruities of existing global education definitions tend to be idiosyncratic rather than substantive. A comparative analysis of major definitions showed that global scholars agree on four essential elements in defining the field. Some scholars expanded the existing global definitions.

Scholars, independent of each other and outside the field of global education, also have voiced their views about why a global education is required in a global age and what defines the global citizen of the twenty-first century. They described globally educated people as those who possess high-tech skills, broad interdisciplinary knowledge about

the contemporary world, and adaptability, flexibility, and world-mindedness to participate effectively in the globalized world. Robert Reich, former U.S. secretary of labor, described them as “symbolic analyst” (1991); Paul Kennedy (1993) referred to them as “citizen of the world”; Joel Kotkin (1993) called them “quintessential cosmopolitan”; and Peter Drucker (1993) referred to the globally literate individual as the “educated person of the 21st century.”

Our global age requires a global education. The field has come of age; it has passed its fiftieth anniversary. It has gained new momentum and plays an increasing role in the United States and the world. Despite some definitional ambiguities, global education offers teachers opportunities to guide students on their twenty-first century journey to shape a more peaceful world.

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To break into the publishing world, start by submitting a feature on one of your classroom success stories. Follow the directions to authors that are printed on the inside back cover of the journal. Also, consider the following tips:

- Describe the class project—its purpose and objectives, the materials needed, the results, and the children's response.
- Write straightforward sentences, using strong verbs in the active voice. What you are trying to convey is a sense of "this worked for me and you too can do it successfully."
- Clear photos of children at work on the project are a useful addition. Black and white or color prints are acceptable. Written permission from the subjects' parents is necessary.

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